



September 2026

Welcome to our quarterly Essex Sexual Health Newsletter!

Our team have been out and about at various summer events, here are the highlights of what we have been up to.

Whether you are a professional working with young people, a parent or carer, or part of a local organisation, our newsletter will keep you connected with everything happening in sexual health across Essex.

A quick overview of what you can find in this newsletter edition:

- New weekly STI testing drop in clinic
- Updates about what the team have been doing
- New projects launching: Broadcasting, real talk and E learning
- Upcoming events and training
- Our latest blog posts

Sexual Health Week 2026

This week, Monday 14 to Sunday 20 September 2026 is Sexual Health Week and this year's theme is 'Let's Connect'.

The week provides a valuable opportunity to start conversations about sexual health, with this year's theme focusing on the importance of connection across platonic, romantic and sexual relationships. It offers a great platform to open up meaningful conversations and raise awareness around sexual health and wellbeing.

To help you promote and support Sexual Health Week, you can access the campaign toolkit by [clicking here](#).

As part of Sexual Health Week 2026, we have launched a new free e-learning portal, alongside offering free training for parents and carers, releasing a new portal to educational settings who have achieved Bronze status through the RSHE Recognition Award Scheme to access a free resource portal, including lesson plans and presentations.

The e-learning portal has gone live this morning, Monday 14 September and can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

RSHE live broadcasting official launch

We are proud to launch our free RSHE Live Broadcasting sessions, where educators of young people, including educational settings and home educated parents and carers, can sign their young people up to access our online education sessions followed by a live Q&A at the end of the session. There are a variety of subjects you can choose to access, and these will be available to access at various times of selected days.

You can watch an example clip of our Live Broadcast [here](#).

Our current available sessions can be found below. All you need to do is sign up via the [registration form on our website by clicking here](#) and you will be sent joining details for the session.

- Friday 18 September 2026, 10.15am to 10.55am (KS4) - Healthy Relationships
 - Friday 18 September 2026, 1.40pm to 2.20pm (KS5) - Healthy Relationships
 - Thursday 26 November 2026, 10.15am to 10.55am (KS4) - Consent
 - Thursday 26 November 2026, 1.40pm to 2.20pm (KS5) - Consent
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Summer outreach in our communities



Summer events have been in full swing and the Essex Sexual Health Service Outreach Team have been out and about across our communities, promoting our services and helping individuals take control of their sexual health.

One of our biggest events was Essex Pride, where we spoke with over 400 people and distributed more than 200 condoms, alongside a range of alternative barrier methods.

We also attended the Jamaican Independence event, Boys and Men event, St Osyth's Music Festival, and many more community events throughout the summer.

Community outreach is a vital part of what we do. Being present at local events gives us the opportunity to have open, friendly conversations about sexual health, provide accessible information and resources, and ensure people know where they can access support when they need it.

RSHE recognition award – new RSHE portal for those with Bronze Award status

Congratulations to Colchester Sixth Form for achieving their Bronze RSHE recognition award. Colchester Sixth Form have



worked incredibly hard to achieve this recognition, demonstrating a strong commitment to developing and embedding RSHE across their setting. Their success reflects the dedication of staff, the involvement of pupils and a whole-school approach to creating meaningful and effective RSHE learning. You can find out more via our [website](#) or our [video explaining the award system](#).

From September, those that have achieved Bronze award status will be given exclusive access to Essex Sexual Health Service RSHE portal, giving them access to PowerPoint presentations, lesson plans and free resources! Even more reason for your educational setting to work towards a Bronze application today!

Real talk

We are excited to announce the roll out of our new programme, Essex Sexual Health Service Youth Outreach and Sexual Health Education Series, Real Talk. The programme provides an informal, interactive, and supportive environment where groups of young people can learn, ask questions, and discuss a range of relationships and sexual health topics. Real Talk consists of 4–6 weekly interactive sessions that is followed up with the opportunity for a private consultation with the team should they have any further questions, or would like an eC-Card assessment. Dependant on location, there may also be opportunity for young

RSHE: what you need to know for 2026-2027

We have put together a new video explaining the key aspects of the latest RSHE guidance that has now come into effect and our service offer updates. You can watch this by [clicking here](#).

people to partake in a clinic visit too. If you work with a group of young people who may benefit from more personalised sessions, please email provide.eshsoutreachteam@nhs.net. If you would like to raise awareness about the Real Talk programme to the young people you work you can access posters and leaflets on our website [here](#).

Mid Essex home education event

Following our previous Home Education events, it's now Mid Essex's turn!

On Tuesday 20 October 2026, home-educated families are invited to attend our event, where we will explore a range of RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) topics to support families in educating their children.

Topics covered will include:

- Healthy relationships
- Consent
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Contraception
- Under-13s
- Sex and pregnancy

Date: Tuesday 20 October 2026

Time: 12pm–5pm

Venue: Boleyn Room, Springfield Parish Council, CM1 6GX

We look forward to welcoming home-educated families from across Mid Essex.

We have a variety of free resources that have been created:

- [Menstrual Cycle Video](#)
- [Sexual Pleasure Video](#)
- [ESHS Resource Hub](#)
- [Our TikTok Page](#)

Don't forget that we have our ESHS Umbrella Project which supports commercial sex workers who live or work in Essex, find out more information [here](#).

HIV awareness session for local theatre group's upcoming show



Outreach and Education team and the HIV Support Service worked together leading an adapted version of our community HIV Awareness workshop for the Springers' cast and production team of their next show, RENT. Giving an overview of the effects of HIV, routes of transmission and prevention. The team also included extra activities focusing on HIV stigma, the attendees reacted to newspaper articles and adverts from the 80s around AIDS and then took part in a role play/ movement activity to understand the impact of HIV stigma.

If you would like to find out more or book any of our community workshops, you can email the Outreach and Education team: provide.eshsoutreachteam@nhs.net

SEND RSHE survey

Following the Essex County Council's RSHE survey that was completed by young people throughout Essex, the Outreach and Education team have been working on ensuring that our SEND learners are able to also be heard with an adapted version of the RSHE survey being offered by our team with a supporting PowerPoint to guide the learners through the survey. If you would like to arrange for your SEND learners to get involved in this survey, please get in touch by emailing provide.eshsoutreachtteam@nhs.net.

Becoming an eC-Card venue

Just a little reminder that you can become an eC-Card venue, providing free condoms to those under 24 years old, by watching our video and filling in the application form [here](#).

If you would like to become an eC-Card assessor, being able to provide condoms to those aged 13 to 15, our next training session is on Tuesday 6 October 2026 - [click here](#) to book your free place.

Essex Sexual Health Service weekly drop-in STI testing clinic – North Essex



We are running a weekly drop-in clinic in North Essex, every Monday afternoon at Colchester High Street Clinic.

The service provides accessible testing for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia, with no need for service users to book an appointment in advance.

The drop-in clinic has been designed to support people experiencing digital poverty who may otherwise struggle to book appointments online, order home testing kits or access their results digitally.

We are committed to taking sexual health testing into communities and making services more accessible to those who may face barriers to attending traditional clinics. By

providing convenient, face-to-face drop-in testing, we are helping to ensure that STI testing is available to everyone, regardless of their access to digital technology.

Where to find the Essex Sexual Health Service Outreach Team

The team will be attending the upcoming following events:

- **Colchester Institute (Colchester and Braintree Campuses)** – Monday 14 and Thursday 17 September
 - **USP Xtend Freshers Fair** – Thursday 10 September
 - **Harlow College** – Monday 14 September and Wednesday 21 October
 - **Chelmsford College Freshers Week** – Tuesday 15 and Thursday 17 September
 - **The Sixth Form College Colchester Drop-in** – Tuesday 15 September
 - **ARU Freshers Fair (Writtle & Chelmsford campuses)** – Wednesday 16 September and Tuesday 6 October
 - **South Essex College Freshers Fair (Luckyn Lane and Basildon Town campuses)** – Thursday 17 and Thursday 24 September
 - **Youth Voice Day** – Saturday 17 October
 - **Harlow Pride** – Saturday 17 October
 - **ESHS Mid Essex Home-Education event** – Tuesday 20 October
 - **Stansted Airport College Wellbeing Fair** – Tuesday 20 October
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Upcoming free online training

Our Outreach and Education Team are offering a number of online, free, multi-agency professional or parents and carers trainings [click here to book](#).

- Tuesday 15 September - [Bitesize: Understanding Rejection, Resilience and Healthy Responses](#)
- Tuesday 15 September - [Parents and Carers Training - Online Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation](#)
- Friday 25 September - [STIs, contraception & local sexual health services](#)
- Monday 5 October - [Exploring the Impacts of Sexist Language](#)
- Tuesday 6 October - [eC-Card training](#)
- Tuesday 6 October - [HIV Today](#)
- Friday 16 October - [Growing up in an online world](#)
- Thursday 26 November – [Sex, Consent and Confidentiality](#)

We can also provide inhouse training, minimum of eight staff required, take a look at our professionals' brochure [here](#).

New blog posts

Check out some of our latest blog posts:

- [The Feed vs Real Life: Busting the Biggest Myths About Pornography](#)
 - [Dating While Trans: Navigating Bodies, Boundaries and Confidence](#)
 - [Do I Still Need to Use Condoms If I'm on the Pill?](#)
 - [Cervical Screening: What to Expect and Why It Matters](#)
 - [Breaking the stigma around HIV](#)
 - [Dry Orgasms: What Are They and Should You Be Worried?](#)
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Sexual health fun fact

This year's Sexual Health Week topic is *Let's Connect*, focusing on human connection and relationships. Human connections may be more important than you think, as studies have found that high-quality relationships can help people live longer, healthier lives. Social connections can

help to reduce the risk of chronic disease and serious illness, such as heart disease, stroke, dementia, depression and anxiety.

Essex Sexual Health Service address:

Provide Community

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United Kingdom

For all inquiries, please contact us at: provide.essexsexualhealthservice@nhs.net

If you would like to opt out of future emails, please [unsubscribe](#)

